

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 09813 01 OF 02 111459Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----095689 111512Z /44

O 111447Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1339  
INFO USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USDELMC BRUSSELS  
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 09813

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS  
SS: MARR, PFOR, NATO, BE, US  
SUBJECT: SHAPE/EUCOM RELOCATION

REF: STATE 189621

1. I HAVE DISCUSSED THE EUCOM RELOCATION PROJECT THROUGHLY WITH GENERAL HAIG AND HAVE VISITED EUCOM FOR A DETAILED BRIEFING ON THE PROJECT. I MUST MAKE CLEAR, FROM THE OUTSET, THAT AGREEMENT BY THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE TRANSFER OF EUCOM HEADQUARTERS TO BELGIAN SOIL - EVEN FOR WARTIME ONLY - IS VERY FAR FROM A ROUTINE DECISION. WE CANNOT ASSUME A FAVORABLE BELGIAN DECISION. SUCH A REQUEST WILL POSE MAJOR ISSUES TO THE BELGIANS - BOTH POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL, AND PERHAPS LEGAL AS WELL - WHICH WILL REQUIRE SEARCHING DEBATE, A CABINET DECISION AND VERY PROBABLY ENABLING LEGISLATION.

2. CONSCIOUS OF THE FOREGOING, THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT ORDERED ITS  
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MOD A YEAR AGO TO CUTOFF THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH U.S. OFFICERS AT SHAPE WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER WAY FOR TECHNICAL PLANNING PURPOSES IN CONNECTION WITH EXPANDING PROJECT 85 TO INCLUDE A EUCOM ELEMENT. MFA OFFICIALS, MOREOVER, REMINDED US LAST DECEMBER THAT CO-LOCATION OF EUCOM, WHICH IS A NATIONAL U.S. MILITARY HEADQUARTERS WITH RESPONSIBILITIES FAR BEYOND THE NATO AREA, WITH SHAPE, AN ALLIED HEADQUARTERS UNDER NATO DISCIPLINE,

WOULD HAVE MAJOR POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR BELGIUM'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICIES. OUR BELGIAN SOURCES PREDICTED THAT ONLY A COMPELLING CASE FOR SHAPE/EUCOM CO-LOCATION ON STRATEGIC GROUNDS, WHICH COULD BE "SOLD" TO THE BELGIAN PUBLIC AS A STRENGTHENING OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY, WOULD MAKE THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT ASSENT TO A U.S. REQUEST POSSIBLE. (SEE 76 BRUSSELS 12689, BRUSSELS 62 (NOTAL), BRUSSELS 1287 (NOTAL) FOR DETAILS ON THE POLITICAL, LEGAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS A EUCOM MOVE WOULD ENTAIL FOR THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT.)

3. THESE OBSTACLES CAN PROBABLY BE OVERCOME PROVIDED THAT WE CAN MAKE AN AIRTIGHT CASE THAT TRANSFER OF EUCOM TO BELGIAN SOIL WOULD BE GOOD - AND EVEN NECESSARY - FOR BELGIUM AND FOR THE NATO ALLIANCE. THE CASE WOULD HAVE TO BE PUT WELL ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND SOPHISTICATED SCRUTINY AND, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, IT WOULD HAVE TO CONVINCE PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS AND FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET THAT THEY MUST SHOULDER THIS POLITICAL CROSS IN THE INTEREST OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE.

4. THE TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT MAKE SUCH A DECISION - EVEN PROVISIONALLY - BY SEPTEMBER 1. UNDER THE BEST IMAGINABLE CIRCUMSTANCES THE ISSUE WOULD HAVE TO BE STAFFED OUT AMONG SEVERAL MINISTRIES AND WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS, PRESENTED TO THE CABINET, COALITION PARTY LEADERS CONSULTED, AND HEADS OF THE RELEVANT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES BROUGHT INTO THE POLITICAL AND LEGAL DELIBERATIONS. IN THESE DELIBERATIONS A DISTINCTION BETWEEN

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ACTIVATION OF A STANDBY EUCOM FACILITY IN BELGIUM FOR USE IN WARTIME WOULD BE REGARDED AS SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT FROM A MOVE OF EUCOM FROM STUTTGART TO CASTEAU FORTHWITH. TO COME FORWARD WITH A BID FOR HALF A LOAF AND AT THE SAME TIME TO GIVE FAIR WARNING THAT WE MAY WELL BE BACK FOR THE WHOLE LOAF LATER WILL PREDICTABLY CONVINCE THE BELGIANS THAT THEY MUST DECIDE NOW WHETHER IT IS THE WHOLE LOAF OR NOTHING, OR POSTPONE ANY DECISION UNTIL THEY RECEIVE THE FINAL U.S. PROPOSAL.

5. I RECOMMEND, THEREFORE, THAT WE GIVE CAREFUL, HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATION TO THE MANNER IN WHICH WE LAUNCH THIS IMPORTANT INITIATIVE IN BELGIUM IF THE DECISION IS MADE TO DO SO.

6. ONE CLEAR AND PRESSING NEED FOR ANY PRESENTATION TO THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS A CONCISE EXPLANATION IN NON-TECHNICAL TERMS OF THE STRATEGIC NEED TO THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE FOR THE PROPOSED MOVE. THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE PROVIDED AT THE OUTSET OF A FORMAL PRESENTATION OF OUR REQUEST TO THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT. WE WOULD WANT TO GET AND KEEP BELGIAN ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE OVERALL STRATEGIC NEED FOR THE CO-LOCATION AS BEING TO THEIR ADVANTAGE AS WELL AS TO THAT OF ALL THE NATO ALLIES.

7. THIS IN TURN ENTAILS A DECISION WHETHER TO LIMIT OUR ASPIRATIONS TO STANDBY FACILITIES FOR ACTIVATION, WITH BELGIUM'S PRIOR ACQUIESCE, ONLY IN A WAR EMERGENCY SITUATION, OR WHETHER TO SEEK BELGIUM'S AGREEMENT TO SHAPE/EUCOM CO-LOCATION AT ONCE. IF THE DECISION IS MADE FOR THE FORMER, WE WOULD NEED TO TELL THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AT OUR INITIAL PRESENTATION HOW MANY CUSTODIAL PERSONNEL WOULD BE INVOLVED IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE WARTIME-ONLY FACILITY.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----095728 111512Z /44  
O 111447Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
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INFO USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USDELMC BRUSSELS  
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 09813  
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8. AT THE TIME I MAY BE INSTRUCTED TO MAKE A PRESENTATION TO THE BELGIANS I WILL, OF COURSE, NEED TO HAVE FULL INFORMATION NOT ONLY ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE CO-LOCATION PROPOSAL (E.G. NUMBERS, PROPOSED STATUS OF THE PERSONNEL, FINANCING ASPECTS), BUT ALSO ANSWERS TO THE POLICY QUESTIONS WHICH THE BELGIANS WOULD BE SURE TO RAISE (E.G. PARA 5 BRUSSELS 62, NOL). CHAMBERS

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